

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07 L-03
NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06
AID-05 IGA-02 /065 W
-----221449Z 038993 /43

R 221252Z MAR 77

FM AMEMBASSY LISBON
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0641
INFO AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY MADRID
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMCONSUL OPORTO
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMCONSUL PONTA DELGADA
USMISSION NATO
DIA WASHDC
USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GER

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E.O. 11652: XGDS-2
TAGS: PINT PO
SUBJECT: CENTER DEMOCRATS EXPEL GEN GALVAO DE MELO

REFS: (A) LISBON 1933 (DTG 101800Z MAR 77),
(B) LISBON 2164 (DTG 171820Z MAR 77),
(C) LISBON 2117 (DTG 161806Z MAR 77).
(D) IR 6-879-0118-77

SUMMARY: THE CDS EXPelled GENERAL GALVAO DE MELO FROM ITS PARLIAMENTARY GROUP FOLLOWING MELO'S REFUSAL TO RETRACT HIS PUBLISHED CRITICISM OF PRESIDENT EANES AND CDS PRESIDENT FREITAS DO AMARAL. CDS VICE LEADER AMARO DA COSTA EXPRESSED CONFIDENCE THAT THE PARTY HAD STRENGTHENED ITSELF AND THAT MELO WOULD HAVE LITTLE SUCCESS IN BUILDING A POWER BASE AMONG RETURNEES. THE CDS-MELO SPLIT

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SHOULD MAKE COOPERATION AMONG THE DEMOCRATIC PARTIES EASIER AND HELP TO ISOLATE THE EXTREMES. END SUMMARY.

1. GALVAO DE MELO SPEAKS OUT: GEN GALVAO DE MELO AN INDEPENDENT DEPUTY ELECTED ON THE CENTER DEMOCRATIC (CDS) LIST, GAVE TWO CONTROVERSIAL INTERVIEWS IN THE MAR 17 "OPCAO" AND MAR 18 "O PAIS." MELO WHO HAS

STIRRED CONTROVERSY RECENTLY WITH SPEECHES IN THE ASSEMBLY AND TO RETURNEES (REF A), MADE THE FOLLOWING COMMENTS IN LAST WEEK'S INTERVIEWS:

-- CDS PRESIDENT FREITAS DO AMARAL IS NOT ENOUGH OF A LEADER TO BE PRIME MINISTER;
-- PRESIDENT EANES HAS NOT SHOWN HIMSELF A STRONG LEADER; "EANES IS VERY INTROVERTED AND PERHAPS SOMEWHAT INHIBITED."
-- "AN AUTHORITARIAN REGIME MIGHT BE NECESSARY ON A TEMPORARY BASIS."
-- "I AM PREPARED TO PARTICIPATE IN A MILITARY OPERATION IN ANGOLA."

2. CDS REACTS: CDS VICE LEADER AMARO DA COSTA PROVIDED DCM WITH ACCOUNT OF PARTY'S DECISION TO EXPEL MELO FROM THE CDS PARLIAMENTARY DELEGATION. COSTA WAS NOT EUPHORIC; BUT HE WAS SATISIFIED THAT THE PARTY HAD THE COURAGE TO TAKE A NECESSARY, BUT PAINFUL, ACTION AGAINST THE FLAMBOYANT, ULTRA-CONSERVATIVE RETIRED GENERAL.

3. MELO VOTED OUT: COSTA SAID HE AND PARTY LEADER FREITAS DO AMARAL FIRST BECAME AWARE OF GALVAO DE MELO'S STATEMENTS WHEN THEY WERE PUBLISHED. THEIR IMMEDIATE REACTION WAS THAT THE GENERAL WAS CONSCIOUSLY SEEKING A SHOWDOWN TO TAKE OVER LEADERSHIP OF THE CDS AND LEAD IT IN AN EXTREME DIRECTION. AMARAL FELT THIS COULD NOT BE PERMITTED AND THAT GALVAO DE MELO SHOULD BE EXCLUDED FROM ANY CONNECTION WITH THE CDS. BUT AMARAL ALSO FELT THE PARLIAMENTARY DELEGATION ITSELF HAD TO MAKE THIS DECISION. THE DELEGATION MET THE NIGHT OF

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MAR18 AFTER ASSEMBLY DEBATE ON THE GOVERNMENT'S ECONOMIC PROGRAM HAD ENDED. THEY VOTED 32-1 THAT THE GENERAL'S STATEMENTS WERE A "GRAVE MATTER" AND THAT HE SHOULD BE HEARD BY MEMBERS OF THE PARTY DELEGATION. THE GENERAL WAS THEN ASKED TO ATTEND A MEETING WHICH BEGAN AT 4 A.M. THE SAME DAY. DURING THE LENGTHY DISCUSSION THAT ENSUED, GALVAO DE MELO REFUSED TO RETRACT HIS OFFENSIVE REMARKS AND OPENLY DENIGRATED THE PARTY LEADERSHIP. THE DELEGATION THEN HELD A SECRET BALLOT EXPELLING THE GENERAL BY A VOTE OF 27-3, WITH 3 ABSTENTIONS.

4. MELO'S FUTURE: COSTA DESCRIBED GALVAO DE MELO AS A "MANIC DEPRESSIVE." IN ANSWER TO A QUERY HE SAID THAT GALVAO DE MELO COULD NOW BE EXPECTED TO BE HYPERACTIVE FOR A WEEK OR SO -- PARTICULARLY WITH

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RETURNEES FROM AFRICA. THIS IS WHERE HE WILL SEEK TO BUILD A POWER BASE, BUT WITHOUT SUCCESS IN COSTA'S OPINION.

5. CDS BENEFITS: COSTA ALSO THOUGHT THAT THE CDS ACTION AGAINST GALVAO DE MELO WOULD HAVE OTHER BENEFICIAL EFFECTS. HE EXPECTS THE PARTY TO GAIN ADDITIONAL CREDIBILITY WITH PRESIDENT EANES AND DEMOCRATICALLY-INCLINDE PORTUGUESE MILITARY MEN SINCE "THEY RESPECT AUTHORITY." HE COMPARED HIS PARTY'S FORCEFUL ACTION AGAINST GALVAO DE MELO WITH SOCIALIST WAFFLING IN THE FACE OF CHALLENGES FROM THE PS LEFT WING. FINALLY, COSTA SAID THAT BY EXORCISING GALVAO DE MELO FROM THE CONSERVATIVE CDS, THE PARTY MADE IT POSSIBLE FOR PRESIDENT EANES TO MOVE AGAINST

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MAJOR MELO ANTUNES AND OTHER LEFTIST MILITARY. THE CNETER DEMOCRATS CONTINUE TO HOPE THAT EANES WILL REDUCE THE PERSONAL INFLUENCE OF MELO ANTUNES AND

THAT OF THE REVOLUTIONARY COUNCIL AS AN INSTITUTION.

6. AMARAL CITES TOTALITARIAN TEMPTATION: CDS PRESIDENT FREITAS DO AMARAL TOLD A MAR 19 GATHERING OF CDS MEMBERS THAT:

-- CDS IS TARGET OF UNDEMOCRATIC RIGHT: THE CDS HAS RECENTLY BECOME THE TARGET OF FORCES WHICH ARE ATTEMPTING TO DESTROY THE PARTY AND IMPLANT A DICTATORIAL REGIME OF THE UNDEMOCRATIC RIGHT. THE CDS MUST MOBILIZE AGAINST "EFFORTS AT INTERNAL DESTABILIZATION" PROVOKED BY THE FAR RIGHT.

-- COMMUNISTS ARE IN ON ATTACK: THE COMMUNISTS AND THE FAR RIGHT ARE BOTH ATTACKING THE CDS. BUT, THE CDS IS STRONG ENOUGH TO OPPOSE TOTALITARIAN MANEUVERS.

-- MELO SOUGHT TO DIVERT CDS: THE RECENT SPEECHES OF GENERAL GALVAO DE MELO ARE PART OF A CONCERTED CAMPAIGN TO DIVERT THE CDS FROM ITS DEMOCRATIC LINE. GALVAO DE MELO MOVED FROM "INDEPENDENCE TO INTERFERENCE."

"WE ONLY ACCEPT ATTACKS FROM OUR ENEMIES."

-- BOMBS WILL NOT DISSUADE: THE CDS WILL NOT BE DISSUADED FROM ITS COURSE BY BOMBS OR THREATS (IN ADDITION TO THE BOMB PLACED OUTSIDE FREITAS DO AMARAL'S HOME MAR 15 (REF B), ANOTHER BOMB WAS FOUND BEFORE IT COULD EXPLODE OUTSIDE CDS HEADQUARTERS MAR 19.

7. COMMENT: THE CDS LEADERSHIP HAS BEEN INCREASINGLY CONCERNED OVER THE PAST TWO MONTHS AT ITS INABILITY TO CONTROL GALVAO DE MELO (REF C). MELO'S ATTACKS ON AMARAL AND EANES GAVE THE CDS THE OPPORTUNITY TO MAKE A CLEAN BREAK WHICH SHOULD WITHSTAND THE SCRUTINY OF THE RANK-AND-FILE. ON THE OTHER HAND, AMARO DA COSTA'S ASSESSMENT OF THE REACTION WITHIN THE PARTY STRIKES US AS OVERLY OPTIMISTIC. WE EXPECT THAT THE CDS LEADERSHIP WILL CONTINUE TO HAVE

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PROBLEMS FROM THE PARTY'S RIGHT WING, WHICH FREITAS DO AMARAL HAS BEEN ABLE TO DOMINATE BY VIRTUE OF HIS RECOGNIZED LEADERSHIP QUALITIES AND GROWING NATIONAL STATURE.

8. THE FAR RIGHT IS LIKELY TO STEP UP ITS EFFORTS TO USE GALVAO DE MELO (REF D). THE ABSENCE OF POLITICAL PARTY COVER AND SUPPORT, HOWEVER, WILL HANDICAP MELO'S ATTEMPTS TO BUILD A FOLLOWING. THE CDS-MELO SPLIT SHOULD MAKE COOPERATION AMONG THE DEMOCRATIC PARTIES EASIER AND HELP TO ISOLATE THE EXTREMES.

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